

THE PACIFIC ARTS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

www.pacificarts.org

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The Pacific Arts Association-Europe Annual Meeting Brussels, Ghent, Antwerp- October 29-31, 2008

Nearly 120 world-wide attendees came to Belgium for the PAA-Europe's Annual Meeting and symposium this October. The events, admirably coordinated by Pauline van der Zee, were centered around the reopening of the Oceania rooms of the Royal Museum for Art and History (KMKH) at the Cinquantenaire Museum on October 30th and the *Oceania* exhibition held at the ING Cultural Centre on the Mont des Arts in Brussels. In addition, there were visits to the ethnographic collections of Het Pand at the University of Ghent, and to the Oceania collection of the Ethnographic Museum of Antwerp, as well as to private collections. The General Assembly was held at Het Pand, where the minutes of May 2006 PAA GA were accepted; the *PAA Journal* was discussed; Maori PAA member George Nuku's request to reconsider the display of two *mokomokai* Maori heads at the MRAH was presented; and a closing moment of silence was held in memory of Philip Dark.

The PAA-E symposium this year centered on the newly displayed Oceania collection at Brussels' Cinquantenaire and the major Oceania exhibition held at the ING Cultural Centre. Two themes were addressed at the conference: The cultural significance of the human body in the art of the peoples of the South Pacific, and the transference of indigenous knowledge via artifacts within the South Pacific and to the West.

Speakers came from Europe and the US, Australia, New Zealand and Hawaii with presentations including perspectives in archeology, cultural anthropology, fresh interpretations of materials and more.

Our thanks are due to sponsors and supporters: Musees royaux d'Art et d'Histoire; Universiteit Gent; Etnografisch Museum, Antwerp, ING, New Zealand Embassy Mission to the European Union Brussels, Kevin Conru, Herma and Joris Visser, Kreglinger Europe NV, private collectors and others.



*Reopening of the Oceania Collection
at the Cinquantenaire Museum of the
Royal Museums for Art and History, Brussels*

In the newly reopened rooms of the late 19th century Cinquantenaire, most important of Belgium's Royal Museums of Art and History, on display are some 150 objects covering areas of Polynesia and Micronesia. The greater part of the collection, housed in the *Mercator* Galleries, draws on the works brought back by the Franco-Belgian 1934-35 expedition to Easter Island on the Belgian merchant ship *Mercator*. Of these, the impressive stone colossus presented to Belgium by the government of Chile in thanks for the *in situ* scientific research conducted at the time, is at the center of the Exhibition, one of only two such complete figures in Europe.



Two unusual sea charts from the Marshall Islands, weapons from the Gilbert Islands, two outstanding wooden statuettes from Easter Island, an exceptional Austral headdress and examples of Maori cultural artifacts are among the many other highlights of this exhibition. Presented in a

geographic lay-out simulating the migratory direction from South East Asia to Easter Island, the gallery design also allows for the study of such themes as navigation, weaponry, warfare, tattoos and making of finery and tapa.

For more Museum details visit: <http://www.mrah.be/newfr/index.asp?id=795>

The Ethnographic Collection of Het Pand at the University of Ghent

The 4000 item Ethnographic Collection held by the early 19th century University of Ghent permanently displays some 300 items in the now landmarked medieval premises of Het Pand. First built as a Hospital, the building long served as a Dominican monastery, before eventually becoming commercial property prior to its acquisition by the University.



The core of its Oceanic holdings came to Ghent in the 19th century, where Frans Olbrechts' ethnology and ethnic arts teachings played a significant role in the acceptance of the arts of Africa, Oceania and Meso-America as equal to that of the West. Very regrettably, the Department of Ethnic Art closes with the graduation of this year's students, and it is with this in mind that the Department organized this first and last international meeting in this field here.



The Ethnographic Museum of Antwerp



The small but impressive Oceanic collection in this rare public exhibition of Pacific works in Belgium includes pieces from Australia, Melanesia, Polynesia and Micronesia. Among the holdings of this small but important collection of Oceanic art, are an Asmat ancestor pole of more than 5 meters (1956); masks and sculptures from New Ireland, a finely carved wooden scale model Maori war canoe, along with symbols of status from Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, the Solomon Islands and the Marquesas.

The first Oceanic objects in the city of Antwerp's collection, were assembled prior to 1864 and were moved among various edifices until

Frans Olbrechts succeeded in his lobbying efforts to create a separate museum in keeping with a scientific approach to the collection; the current location was opened in 1988. Today, the museum is set to move into the MAS (Museum aan de Stroom) when it is finished, and will join the collections of the Natural Maritime Museum, the Butcher's Guild Museum and the Museum of Folklore. The Oceania collections will be shown on the 6th floor together with the African collection where presentation and documentation of the pieces will be centered around their "cultural biography." An important aim will be to give the public a dynamic and historical concept of Pacific cultures via traditional works complemented by displays of today's works and multimedia presentations of contemporary cultural phenomena.

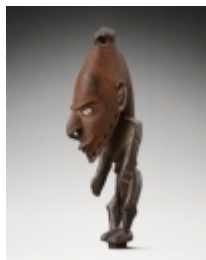
For more museum details visit:

http://museum.antwerpen.be/etnografisch_museum/index_eng.html



*Oceania: Signs of ritual, symbols of authority
Exhibition at the ING Cultural Centre, Brussels*

The global financial services company, ING not only holds its own collection of 25,000 works of art, but actively sponsors important international exhibitions of art at its Brussels Cultural Centre on the Mont des Arts. ING brought together some 200 works of Oceanic art in order to present its great richness and diversity to the Belgian public.



Conceived as an imaginary journey through Melanesia, Polynesia and Micronesia, with carefully selected objects from prestigious Belgian private collections and Belgian, Dutch, French and German Museums, these works provide an inquisitive public a clear and intriguing perspective on the various Pacific cultures, and are representative of their aesthetic traditions.

A catalogue in French or Dutch accompanies the exhibition. For details see *Website & Publications* section of this Newsletter.

Visits to private collections

A private reception was held in Herma and Joris Visser's Gallery specializing in tribal art. Located in the historical heart of Brussels near the Sablon, the Gallery is housed in a wonderfully preserved example of Victor Horta's early (1894) edifices.

Tribal arts gallerist and collectors Kevin and Anna Conru hosted a private reception at their home on the Sablon. At the same time, photographs of New Ireland, taken by Bart van Bussel, were featured in the exhibition at their nearby gallery Conru.

PAA-E members were invited to tour the headquarters of the 1797-established-Kreglinger company's large holdings of Aboriginal arts housed in the crossbow societies' guildhouse, which is the oldest on the Antwerp Grote Markt.

Additionally members were privileged with a visit to the private residence of Ann and Rene Van der Straete to view their extensive collection on display in their family home located on a wooded hillside. The owners change-over the display of their vast holdings of African and Oceanic works every six months; on this occasion, Oceanic art was featured in honor of their PAA-E guests.



At the Van der Straete's

In Memoriam

*Philip J. C .Dark
Leading Authority on Tribal Arts*



Philip John Crosskey Dark (1918-2008), professor emeritus of Anthropology at Southern Illinois University, a leading authority on tribal arts, particularly of Benin and the Pacific, as well as a pivotal figure of the PAA, passed away on April 4th in Cornwall.

Dark chose to focus on the art and peoples of the Pacific region in the 1960's, leading to his fieldwork (in the company of his wife Mavis) in West New Britain with the Kilenge. The Pacific, including the Abelam area of Papua New Guinea, Irian Jaya, and Palau, continued to be his major area of interest for the next 35 years.

In 1975, after his retirement from the University, he returned to England and to new activities which included his work as the first editor of the *Pacific Arts Association Newsletter*, the role he played for the next 25 years.

Described as "a meticulous scholar, a brilliant photographer, and an avid book collector, with a constantly inquisitive mind and many interests outside of anthropology, ranging from art to politics to travel...." Dark is said to have been "gentlemanly in demeanor, with a quiet wit, unfailingly considerate of others and sensitive to their needs." A supportive mentor, his Pacific research notes and photograph have been given to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

[With thanks to Jerome S Handler for his source obituary of Dark in *American Anthropologist*, Fall 2008]

Jordan Merritt Wright



Jordan Merritt Wright was born in Brooklyn on Feb. 26, 1958. Son of artist Faith-dorian and Martin Wright, important collectors of tribal arts, he became an energetic art collector himself. His passion for Oceanic art was reflected in his trip to New Guinea to take photographs that were then exhibited in several museums.

Starting in 2005, he helped revive the *Pacific Arts Journal*, the scholarly journal that had ceased publication. Mr. Wright was instrumental in developing a new format for the publication and generating critical ad sales for it.

In January of this year, Wright published *Campaigning for President*. At the time of his untimely demise on May 11 at the age of 50, he was working on his next project, creating the Museum of Democracy.

[With thanks to Douglas Martin for source obituary in the *New York Times*, June 1, 08]
See section on *Pacific Arts, Journal of the PAA* by Carol Ivory further in this *Newsletter*.

Events, Exhibitions & Symposia

Event at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology

Cambridge, England- December 4, 2008

You will all be aware of the Maori carver Tene Waitere through Roger Neich's magnificent *Carved Histories*. One of Tene's less well known works is a *pouhaki*, or fully carved flagpole, made in 1920 as a gift for the then Prince of Wales, Edward, who was touring the colonies to thank them for supporting England during World War I. On his return, this *pouhaki* was presented by the Prince to the Navy, and erected at Whale Island, a base in Portsmouth Harbor where it remained until last year.

Following discussions involving Tene's great-great-great grandson James Schuster, the Navy and other bodies, the flagpole was moved to Cambridge for conservation work, and will be on permanent display there. A ceremony of dedication took place on the evening of December 4, attended by James and Cathy Schuster from Rotorua, Ngati Ranana, and others.

www.maa-cambridge.org

Gods, Ghosts and Men:

Pacific arts from the National Gallery of Australia

Canberra- until January 11, 2009



The first major exhibition of Pacific art to be held in Australia for nearly twenty years displays many of the works for the first time. The display embraces the diverse Melanesian, Polynesian sculptural traditions of Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands, Easter Island, New Zealand and the Marquesas Islands. The items range from massive house posts, shields, masks, spirit figures and other objects in wood and stone, some dating back to around 4,000 BCE, to concealing fibre dance costumes and woven cloaks of regency. [With thanks to Robin Hodgson as source]

<http://nga.gov.au/GodsGhostsMen/>

Mangareva :The Pantheon of Polynesia

Musée du quai Branly, Paris - February 3 – May 10, 2009

The exhibition brings together the only known works of art from Mangareva, a small island in the Gambier archipelago in French Polynesia. The works of art, a dozen statues, both anthropomorphic and not, have been loaned by prestigious institutions such as the British Museum, the Vatican Museums,

the Metropolitan Museum, etc.) Brought together for the first time in a public exhibition, they are outstanding, not only because of their rarity but also because the shape of these sculptures differ from those of classical Polynesian sculpture. The exhibition is an opportunity to offer an update on a widely unknown culture and to discover how rich and unique this insular culture is. It is also a way for Mangarevian people to confront their original gods and rediscover their past. The 64 page catalogue *Mangareva* is a coedition with the musée de Tahiti .
www.quaibrantly.fr/en/accueil/index.html

Time and Tide: The changing art of the Asmat of New Guinea from the American Museum of Asmat Art at the University of St. Thomas Opening at Minneapolis Institute of Arts (MIA)- February 14, 2009

The exhibition *Time and Tide: The Changing Art of the Asmat of New Guinea* features seventy-two objects that focus on the distinct and powerful aesthetic sense of the Asmat people of southwestern New Guinea and its expression in a number of art forms, especially sculpture, fiber arts, and decorative painting. Featured artworks range from the ceremonial to the utilitarian—shields and spears, spirit masks, woven bags, drums, openwork carvings, and figural sculpture—each one conveying the exceptional graphic impact and sophistication of the Asmat aesthetic. The exhibition has been organized by the MIA in collaboration with the American Museum of Asmat Art at the University of St. Thomas, Saint Paul.

Time and Tide focuses chiefly on two of the many forms of Asmat art: wood sculpture and fiber art. Because the more ephemeral but equally important genres of Asmat music, dance, and painted body decoration are difficult to preserve and exhibit in a museum setting, the exhibition features work that takes durable physical form. The exhibition traces and illuminates visual and cultural themes illustrating the broad scope of Asmat creativity and also explores how their art has changed in recent years, as greater exposure to the larger world has led Asmat sculptors and weavers to absorb and adapt new ideas. A fully illustrated catalogue accompanies the exhibition.

www.artsmia.org

http://www.stthomas.edu/asmat/art/gallery_index.html#null



Symposia

The following conferences are currently in the planning stages:

PAA (an affiliated society of the CAA) Annual Meeting and Session at the

College Art Association Annual Conference

✚ Los Angeles, California -February 25-28, 2009

✚ Chicago, Illinois – TBA 2010

It is hoped that the PAA will have a longer session slot in 2010. Three session proposals have been received and submitted to CAA and notification of session selection should come soon.

<http://www.collegeart.org>

PAA Europe

2009 Annual Meeting

Bonn, Germany

October 2009

On the occasion of the new exhibition, *James Cook and the Exploration of the Pacific* (28 August 2009 - 10 January 2010) at the Art and Exhibition Hall of the Federal Republic of Germany in Bonn. www.bundeskunsthalle.de

Pacific Arts Association's

Xth International Symposium

Rarotonga, Cook Islands

Second week of August 2010

For other conferences and/or exhibitions that may be of interest, visit the Announcements page of the PAA website (www.pacificarts.org).

Pacific Arts, Journal of the PAA

It is with great sadness that we informed our members last May of the untimely and sudden death of Jordan Wright, publisher of the *Pacific Arts Association Journal*. Beginning in 2006, Jordan revived our publication and with his staff helped us produce seven issues. His enthusiasm and commitment to the Pacific Arts Association was intertwined with his love for the arts and cultures of Oceania. We deeply mourn his passing and send our condolences to his family.

The Executive Committee of PAA remains committed to *Pacific Arts*. Members of the Executive Committee and the PAA-Europe Executive Committee present in Brussels met to discuss the present state of the journal as a result of this tremendous loss. Carol Ivory reported that Jordan's estate is still in probate, and as a result, PAA funds at Volo are still unavailable to us. We hope that the financial aspects will be resolved as soon as possible.

Without Jordan's assistance, the editors feel that two volumes a year are impossible to produce at this time. The Executive Committee agreed, and so the decision was made, that Issue NS #7, published earlier this year will be the sole volume for 2008. We do have material for another issue, and plan to produce NS #8 by mid-year 2009, which will be the sole volume for next year.

Carol Ivory and Virginia-Lee Webb will shortly be stepping down as editors of the New Series; Anne Allen will continue as the journal transitions after NS 8. At this time, the Executive Committee is exploring future options; the future of the journal depends on the input and participation of the membership. We need and welcome suggestions, ideas, and/or proposals from members about the next steps. We strongly urge members' expressions of interest in participating in the editing duties/process. We also encourage articles and reviews (exhibit, book, or video) for future issues.

If you have paid 2008 dues and have not received your journal, please contact Molly Huber (mhuber@artsmia.org). Unfortunately, there will be a delay in sending your copy out until further resolution of Mr Wright's estate.

We thank the members, and especially the authors awaiting publication of their submissions, for your patience and understanding as we endeavor to move forward.

Website & Publications

Please visit the new version of the **Pacific Arts Association website** at <http://www.pacificarts.org/> on a regular basis. Not only is the PAA Newsletter available on site, so is regularly updated information regarding job listings, symposia, exhibitions, and other topics of interest.

Chasseurs de diables et collecteurs d'art: Tentatives de conversion des Asmat par les missionnaires pionniers protestants et catholiques

By Dr Astrid de Hontheim

From the Series: *Dieux, Hommes et Religions: Gods, Humans and Religions* Vol. 12, 2008

The publication, in French, focuses on the concept of conversion and evaluates its relevance in light of the ethnography of the West Papuan population, the Asmat. Done in a tense political situation, this work compares the Catholic and Protestant missions from an anthropological and ecclesiastical point of view and their mutual

influence on the populations. Paralleling the Asmat ethnography is the anthropology of the contemporary pioneer missionary. Finally, in the battle of ideas on conversion comes a theoretical vacuum which a new concept comes to fill: Christianization.

Peter Lang Publishing Group
 Bruxelles, Bern, Berlin, Frankfurt am Main, New York, Oxford, Wien, 2008
 317 pages, 26 illustrations
 ISBN 978-90-5201-380-0
www.peterlang.com.

Between Indigenous Australia and Europe: John Mawurndjul

Art Histories In Context Art Histories in Context
 Hrsg. Christian Kaufmann, Volkenandt und Claus Edited by Christian Kaufmann and Claus Volkenandt

The work of John Mawurndjul (b1952) is in the tradition of Australian aboriginal culture and appears in museums worldwide. The book looks at fundamental issues of how this art deals with intercultural encounters, because it is both indigenous and international. The authors (art historians, anthropologists and social scientists) ask these questions from different professional and institutional perspectives.

Key aspects are:

- The emergence of local context
- The globalization of contexts (Perspectives from Europe and Australia)
- Cultural and methodological framework of an inter-cultural art
- The museological consequences

Dietrich Reimer Verlag
 Berlin, January 2009
 240 pages, color and black and white illustrations
 ISBN: 978-3-496-02809-3
www.reimer-mann-verlag.de

Oceania: Ritual signs, authority symbols

Edited by Frank Herreman

Oceania makes up a third of the world's surface area. It is divided into three zones: Melanesia, Polynesia and Micronesia. The populations of these regions have given birth to highly contrasting types of art honoring their gods, their ancestors or the spirits of Nature as well as jewelry and personal ornaments.

The art works in this title - many previously unpublished - are placed in context by specialist writers. With contributions by Ingrid Heermann, Karen Jacobs, Bart Suys and Pauline van der Zee.

The catalogue accompanies the exhibition of the same name at the ING Cultural Centre, Brussels (23 October 2008 - 15 March 2009). See Exhibitions in this *Newsletter* for details.

Fonds Mercator

Bruxelles, 2008

184 pages; 200 illustrations, available in French and Dutch

ISBN 978 90 6153 837 0 in Dutch

ISBN 978 90 6153838 7 in French

www.mercatorfonds.be

The Pacific Arts of Polynesia and Micronesia

By Adrienne Kaeppler

This new volume offers an introduction to the artistic traditions of Polynesia and Micronesia, traditions that have had a considerable impact on modern western art through the influence of artists such as Gauguin. After an introduction to Polynesian and Micronesian art separately, the book focuses on the artistic types, styles, and concepts shared by the two island groups, thereby placing each in its wider cultural context. From the textiles of Tonga to the canoes of Tahiti, Adrienne Kaeppler sheds light on religious and sacred rituals and objects, carving, architecture, tattooing, personal ornaments, basket-making, clothing, textiles, fashion, the oral arts, dance, music and musical instruments—and canoe-construction—to provide the introduction to these rich and vibrant cultures. Each chapter begins with a quote from an indigenous person from one of the island areas covered in the book and features both historic and contemporary works of art. A timeline for migration into the Pacific includes the latest information from archaeology, as well as the influx of explorers and missionaries and important exhibitions and other artistic events. With more than one hundred illustrations.

Oxford University Press

New York, USA

256 pages; 125 illustrations

ISBN13: 9780192842381

ISBN10: 0192842382

custserv.us@oup.com

News

Michael Gunn, President of the PAA, has moved to Canberra where he has taken up the position of Senior Curator, Pacific Art at the National Gallery of Australia. Dr Gunn joins the National Gallery of Australia from Missouri, America where he has been Associate Curator, Arts of Africa, Oceania and the Americas at the Saint Louis Art Museum since 1999, following his stint in 1994 to 1999 as Associate Curator in the Department of Arts of Africa, Oceania and the Americas at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

His new email address is michael.gunn@nga.gov.au

Barbara Thompson has been appointed The Cantor Arts Center at Stanford University in Palo Alto, California's new Phyllis Wattis Curator for the Arts of Africa and the Americas. Dr. Thompson now oversees the Cantor's collection of African, pre-Columbian, and Native American art---a selection of which is on view in three galleries there. Thompson comes to Stanford from the Hood Museum of Art at Dartmouth College, New Hampshire, where she was the curator of African, Oceanic, and Native American collections. At Stanford, she sees the opportunity for research collaborations that will further develop the Center's collections and present them in innovative ways. With an eye toward bringing in more modern and contemporary works by African and Native American artists, Thompson has a particular interest in diverse art forms and underrepresented regions.

From the Editor

As 2008 draws to a close, it gives me pleasure to reflect in this newsletter on the dynamic activities of the Pacific Arts Association during the last year. Projects planned came to fruition very successfully, as exemplified at the Brussels symposium with its participation by many new and veteran members. And I again tip my hat to Pauline Van der Zee for her efforts on its behalf. A flourish of Pacific Arts exhibitions span 2008, and continue worldwide into 2009 - from Canberra and Sydney in Australia, through Europe, St. Petersburg in Russia, and on to the US. (For more information on these, please visit the regularly updated PAA website at www.pacificarts.org).

Many thanks to Frances Barrow of Tel Aviv for her gifted editing, and to the Israel Museum's computer department for its technical assistance on this second, and last, issue of the *Pacific Arts Association Newsletter* for 2008.

I wish you each a happy holiday season, and a peaceful and prolific
New Year

Dorit Shafir

(doritsh@imj.org.il)

